Fasting Rules from Islamic Laws by Ayatullah Seestani

Fasting means that a person must, in obedience to the commands of Allah, from the time of Adhan for Fajr prayers up to Maghrib, avoid nine things which will be mentioned later.

Niyyat for Fasting

1559. * It is not necessary for a person to pass the niyyat for fasting through his mind or to say that he would be fasting on the following day. In fact, it is sufficient for him to decide that in obedience to the command of Allah he will not perform from the time of Adhan for Fajr prayers up to Maghrib, any act which may invalidate the fast. And in order to ensure that he has been fasting throughout this time he should begin abstaining earlier than the Adhan for Fajr prayers, and continue to refrain for some time after sunset from acts which invalidate a fast.

1560. A person can make niyyat every night of the holy month of Ramadhan that he would be fasting on the following day, and it is better to make niyyat on the first night of Ramadhan that he would fast throughout that month.

1561. * The last time for making niyyat to observe a fast of Ramadhan for a conscious person, is moments before Adhan of Fajr prayers. This means he must be intent upon fasting at that time, even if he later became heedless of his intention due to sleep etc.

1562. * As for Mustahab fast one can make its niyyat at any time in the day, even moments before Maghrib - provided he has not committed any such act which invalidates the fast.

1563. * If a person sleeps before Adhan for Fajr prayers in Ramadhan or any other day fixed for an obligatory fast without making a niyyat, and wakes up before Zuhr to make a niyyat of fast, his fast will be in order. But if he wakes up after Zuhr, as a precaution, he should continue with the abstinence with the niyyat of Qurbat and then give its qadha also.

1564. * If a person intends to keep a fast other than the fast of Ramadhan, he should specify that fast; for example, he should specify it as the qadha fast or a fast to fulfil a vow. On the other hand, it is not necessary that a person should specify in his niyyat that he is going to observe a fast of Ramadhan. If a person is not aware or forgets that it is the month of Ramadhan and makes a niyyat to observe some other fast it will be considered to be the fast of Ramadhan.

1565. * If a person knows that it is the month of Ramadhan, yet intentionally makes an intention of observing a fast other than the fast of the month of Ramadhan his fast will not be reckoned a fast of the month of Ramadhan nor the fast of which he made the niyyat.

1566. If a person observes fast with the niyyat of the first day of the month and understands later that it was the second or third of the month, his fast is in order.

1567. If a person makes an intention before Adhan for dawn prayers to observe a fast and then becomes unconscious and regains his senses during the day time, he should, on the

basis of obligatory precaution, complete the fast on that day, and if he does not complete it, he should observe its qadha.

1568. If a person makes niyyat before the Adhan for Fajr prayers to observe a fast and then gets intoxicated and comes to senses during the day he should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, complete the fast of that day and should also give its qadha.

1569. If a person makes a niyyat before the Adhan for Fajr prayers to observe a fast, and then goes to sleep, and wakes up after Maghrib his fast is in order.

1570. * If a person did not know or forgot that it was the month of Ramadhan, and takes notice of this before Zuhr and if he has performed some act which will invalidates a fast, his fast is void. But, he should not perform any act till Maghrib which invalidates a fast and should also observe qadha of that fast after Ramadhan. The same rule applies if he learns after Zuhr that it is the month of Ramadhan. But if he learns before Zuhr, and if he has not done anything which would invalidate his fast, his fast will be valid.

1571. * If a child reaches the age of puberty before the Adhan for Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadhan he/she should keep fast and if he/she reaches the age of puberty after the Fajr Adhan, the fast of that day is not obligatory for him/her except if he/she intended to observe a Mustahab fast on that day, then he/she should complete it as a precaution.

1572. * If a person who has been hired to observe the fasts of a dead person or has fasts of Kaffarah upon him as an obligation, observes Mustahab fasts, there is no harm in it. However, if a person has his own qadha of fasts, he cannot observe Mustahab fasts. If he forgets this and observes a Mustahab fast and remembers it before Zuhr his Mustahab fast will be void and he can convert his intention to the fast of qadha, and if he takes notice of the situation after Zuhr his fast is void as a precaution, and similarly if he remembers this after Maghrib, the validity of his fast is a matter if Ishkal.

1573. * If it is obligatory for a person to observe a specific fast other than the fast of the month of Ramadhan, for example , if he has vowed that he would observe fast on a particular day, and he does not make an intention purposely till the Adhan for Fajr prayers, his fast is void. And if he does not know that it is obligatory for him to fast on that day or forgets about it and remembers it before midday, and if he has not performed any act which invalidates the fast and makes an intention to fast, his fast is in order, and if he remembers after Zuhr, he should follow the precaution applied to the fast of Ramadhan.

1574. If a person does not make an intention till near Zuhr for an obligatory fast which has no fixed time, like a fast of Kaffarah, there is no harm in it. In fact, if he had decided before making a niyyat that he would not fast, or was undecided as to whether he should or should not fast, if he has not performed any act which invalidates a fast, and decides before Zuhr to fast, his fast will be in order.

1575. * If a non-Muslim embraces Islam in the month of Ramadhan before Zuhr, he should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, make an intention to fast, and complete it provided that he had not committed any act which would make a fast void. And if he does not observe fast on that day he should give its qadha.

1576. * If a patient recovers from his illness in the middle of a day in the month of Ramadhan, before Zuhr, and if he has not done anything to invalidate the fast, he should

make niyyat and fast. But if he recovers after Zuhr, it will not be obligatory on him to fast on that day.

1577. * If one doubts whether it is the last day of Sha'ban or the first day of Ramadhan then the fast on that day is not obligatory. If however, somebody wants to observe fast on that day he cannot do so with the intention of observing the Ramadhan fast, but if he makes an intention that if it is Ramadhan then it is the Ramadhan fast and if it is not Ramadhan then it is qadha fast or some other fast like that, his fast will be valid. But it is better to observe the fast with the intention of qadha fast or some other fast, and if it is known later that it was Ramadhan then it will automatically be Ramadhan fast. And even if he makes a niyyat of a natural fast, and later it becomes known that it is Ramadhan, it will be sufficient (i.e. that fast will be counted as the Ramadhan fast).

1578. If it is doubtful whether it is the last day of Sha'ban or the first of Ramadhan, and a person observes a qadha or a Mustahab fast or some other fast on that day, and later comes to know the same day that it is the first of Ramadhan, then he should convert the intention to the Ramadhan fast.

1579. * If somebody is undecided in his niyyat whether to break or not an obligatory fixed fast, like that of Ramadhan, or decides to do so, immediately his fast becomes invalid even if he does not actually break it or is repentant of his intention.

1580. * If, while observing a Mustahab fast or an obligatory fast the time of which is not fixed (e.g. a fast for Kaffarah) a person intends to break the fast or wavers whether or not he should do so, and if he does not break it, he should make a fresh niyyat before Zuhr in the case of an obligatory fast, and before Maghrib in the case of a Mustahab fast. That way his fast will be in order.

Things which make a Fast void

1581. * There are nine acts which invalidate fast:

(i) Eating and drinking

(ii) Sexual intercourse

(iii) Masturbation (Istimna) which means self abuse, resulting in ejaculation

(iv) Ascribing false things to Almighty Allah, or his Prophet or to the

successors of the Holy Prophet

(v) Swallowing thick dust

(vi) Immersing one's complete head in water

(vii) Remaining in Janabat or Haidh or Nifas till the Adhan for Fajr prayers

(viii) Enema with liquids

(ix) Vomiting

Details of these acts will be explained in the following articles:-

I. Eating and Drinking

1582. If a person eats or drinks something intentionally, while being conscious of fasting, his fast becomes void, irrespective of whether the thing which he ate or drank was usually eaten or drunk (for example bread with water) or not (for example earth or the juice of a tree) and whether it is more or less; even if a person, who is fasting, takes the tooth brush (Miswak) out of his mouth and then puts it back into his mouth, swallowing its liquid, his fast will be void, unless the moisture in the tooth brush mixes up with the saliva in such a way that it may no longer be called an external wetness.

1583. If while eating and drinking, a person realises that it is Fajr, he should throw the food out of his mouth, and if he swallows it intentionally, his fast is void, and according to the rules which will be mentioned later, it also becomes obligatory on him to give Kaffarah.

1584. If a person who is fasting eats or drinks something forgetfully, his fast does not become invalid.

1585. There is no objection to an injection which anaesthetises one's limb or is used for some other purpose being given to a person, who is observing fast, but it is better that the injections which are given as medicine or food are avoided.

1586. If a person observing fast intentionally swallows something which remained in between his teeth, his fast is invalidated.

1587. * If a person wishes to observe a fast, it is not necessary for him to use a toothpick before the Adhan of Fajr prayers. However, if he knows that some particles of food which have remained in between his teeth, will go down into his stomach during the day, then he must clean his teeth with toothpick.

1588. Swallowing saliva does not invalidate a fast, although it may have collected in one's mouth owing to thoughts about sour things etc.

1589. There is no harm in swallowing one's phlegm or mucous from head and chest as long as it does not come upto one's mouth. However, if it reaches one's mouth, the obligatory precaution is that one should not swallow it.

1590. * If a person observing fast becomes so thirsty that he fears that he may die of thirst or sustain some harm or extreme hardship, he can drink as much water as would ensure that the fear is averted. However, his fast becomes invalid, and if it is the month of Ramadhan, as an obligatory precaution, he should not drink more than that, and then for the rest of the day, refrain from all acts which would invalidate the fast.

1591. Chewing food to feed a child or a bird and tasting food etc. which does not usually go down the throat, will not invalidate the fast, even if it happens to reach there inadvertently. However, if a person knows beforehand that it will reach the throat, his fast becomes void, and he should observe its qadha and it is also obligatory upon him to give Kaffarah.

1592. A person cannot abandon fast on account of weakness. However, if his weakness is to such an extent that fasting becomes totally unbearable, there is no harm in breaking the fast.

II. Sexual Intercourse

1593. Sexual intercourse invalidates the fast, even if the penetration is as little as the tip of the male organ, and even if there has been no ejaculation.

1594. * If the penetration is less than the tip of the male organ, so that it cannot be said that intercourse has taken place, also if no ejaculation takes place, the fast does not become invalid. This applies to both, circumcised and uncircumcised men.

1595. If a person commits sexual intercourse intentionally and then doubts whether penetration was upto the point of circumcision or not his fast, as an obligatory precaution, becomes invalid, and it is necessary for him to observe its qadha. It is not, however, obligatory on him to give Kaffarah.

1596. If a person forgets that he is observing fast and commits sexual intercourse or he is compelled to have sexual intercourse in a manner that makes him helpless, his fast does not become void. However, if he remembers (that he is observing fast) or ceases to be helpless during sexual intercourse, he should withdraw from the sexual intercourse at once, and if he does not, his fast becomes void.

III. Istimna (Masturbation)

1597. If a person, who is observing fast, performs masturbation (Istimna), his fast becomes void (The explanation of istimna has been given in rule 1581/iii).

1598. If semen is discharged from the body of a person involuntarily, his fast does not become void.

1599. Even if a person observing fast knows that if he sleeps during the day time he will become Mohtalim (i.e. semen will be discharged from his body during sleep) it is permissible for him to sleep, even if he may not be inconvenienced by not sleeping. And if he becomes Mohtalim, his fast does not become void.

1600. If a person who is observing fast, wakes up from sleep while ejaculation is taking place, it is not obligatory on him to stop it.

1601. A fasting person who has become Mohtalim can urinate even if he knows that by urinating the remaining semen will flow from his body.

1602. * If a fasting person who has become Mohtalim, knows that some semen has remained in his body and if he does not urinate before taking Ghusl, it will come out after Ghusl, he should on the basis of recommended precaution, urinate before taking Ghusl.

1603. * A person who indulges in courtship with an intention to allow semen to be discharged, will complete his fast and also observe its qadha, even if semen is not discharged.

1604. If a fasting person indulges in courtship without the intention of allowing the semen to be discharged, and also, if he is sure that semen will not be discharged, his fast is in order, even if semen may be discharged unexpectedly. However, if he is not sure about the discharge and it takes place, then his fast is void.

IV. Ascribing Lies to Allah and His Prophet

1605. * If a person who is observing fast, intentionally ascribes something false to Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his vicegerents (a.s.), verbally or in writing or by making a sign, his fast becomes void, even if he may at once retract and say that he has uttered a lie or may repent for it. And, as a recommended precaution, he should refrain from imputing lies to Bibi Fatema Zahra (a.s.) and all the Prophets and their successors.

1606. * If a person observing fast wishes to quote something about which he has no authority or he does not know whether it is true or false, he should, as an obligatory precaution, give a reference of the person who reported it, or of the book in which it is written.

1607. * If a person quotes something as the word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet with the belief that it is true, but realises later that it is false, his fast does not become void.

1608. If a person ascribes something to Almighty Allah or the Holy Prophet knowing it to be false and understands later that it was true, as an obligatory precaution, he should complete his fast and should also observe its qadha.

1609. * If a person intentionally ascribes to Allah or the Holy Prophet or the successors of the Holy Prophet a falsehood fabricated by some other person, his fast becomes void. However, if he quotes the person who has fabricated that falsehood, his fast will not be affected.

1610. * If a person who is observing fast, is asked whether the Holy Prophet said such and such thing and he intentionally says 'No' where he should say 'Yes' or intentionally says 'Yes' where he should say 'No', his fast becomes void, as an obligatory precaution.

1611. * If a person quotes a true word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet, and later says that he had uttered a lie, or if he ascribed something false to them at night, and says on the following day when he is observing fast, that what he said on the previous night was true, his fast becomes void, except when his intention is to convey his newly acquired information.

V. Letting Dust Reach One's Throat

1612. * On the basis of obligatory precaution, allowing thick dust to reach one's throat makes one's fast void, whether the dust is of something which is halal to eat, like flour, or of something which is haraam to consume like dust or earth.

1613. * Allowing thin dust to reach one's throat will not invalidate the fast.

1614. * If thick dust is whipped up by the wind and if a person does not take care in spite of taking notice of it, allowing the dust to reach his throat, his fast becomes void on the basis of obligatory precaution.

1615. * As an obligatory precaution, a person who is observing fasts, should not allow the smoke of cigarettes, tobacco, and other similar things to reach his throat.

1616. * If a person does not take care to prevent dust, smoke, etc. from entering his throat, and if he was quiet sure that these things would not reach his throat, his fast is in order; but if he only felt that they might not reach his throat, it is better that he should observe that fast again as qadha.

1617. If a person forgets that he is fasting and does not exercise care, or if dust or any other similar thing enters his throat involuntarily, his fast does not become void.

VI. Immersing One's Head in Water

1618. * If a fasting person intentionally immerses his entire head in the water, his fast is known to be void, even if the rest of his body remains out of water. But this act does not invalidate the fast; it is a Makrooh act, and as a measure of precaution, should be avoided.

1619. * If a person immerses half of his head in the water once, and the other half the second time, his fast is not affected.

1620. * If the entire head is immersed under the water, leaving some hair out, the rule applied will be that mentioned above in 1618.

1621. * There is no harm in immersing one's head in liquids other than water like, in milk. Similarly, fast is not affected by immersing one's head in mixed water that is, Mudhaaf.

1622. * If a fasting person falls into the water involuntarily, and his entire head goes into the water, or if he forgets that he is fasting and immerses his head in the water, his fast is not affected.

1623. * If a person throws himself into the water thinking that his entire head will not go down into the water, and water covers his entire head, his fast remains in order.

1624. * If a person forgets that he is fasting and immerses his head in the water, and he remembers under the water that he is fasting, it is better that he takes his head out of water at once, but if he does not do so, his fast will not be void.

1625. * If a person is pushed into water and his head is immersed in water, the fast is not affected at all. But if the fellow who pushed him and forced his head under water releases him, it is better that he raises his head out of water immediately.

1626. * If a fasting person immerses his head under water with the Niyyat of Ghusl, both his fast and Ghusl will be in order.

1627. * If a person dives headlong in the water to save some one from drowning, although it may be obligatory to save that person, as a recommended precaution, he should give qadha for that fast.

VII. Remaining in Janabat or Haidh or Nifas Till Fajr Time

1628. * If a person in Janabat does not take Ghusl intentionally till the time of Fajr prayers, his/her fast becomes void. And if a person whose obligation is to do tayammum, wilfully does not do it, his/her fast will be also void. This rules apply to the qadha of the fasts of Ramadhan, also.

1629. If a person in Janabat does not take Ghusl intentionally till the time of Fajr prayers, for obligatory fasts other than those of the month of Ramadhan and their qadha, those fasts which have fixed days, like those of Ramadhan, his/her fast will be in order.

1630. * If a person enters the state of Janabat during a night in the month of Ramadhan, and does not take Ghusl intentionally till the time left before Adhan is short, he/she should perform tayammum and observe the fast. However, it is a recommended precaution that its qadha is also given.

1631. If a person in Janabat in the month of Ramadhan forgets to take Ghusl and remembers it after one day, he should observe the qadha of the fast of that day. And if he remembers it after a number of days he should observe the qadha of the fasts of all those days, during which he is certain to have been in Janabat. For example, if he is not sure whether he was in Janabat for three days or four, he should observe the qadha of three days.

1632. If a person who does not have time for Ghusl or performing tayammum in a night of Ramadhan gets into state of Janabat, his fast will be void and it will be obligatory upon him to give qadha of that fast, as well as Kaffarah.

1633. * If a person investigates whether or not he has enough time at his disposal, and believing that he has time for Ghusl, goes into state of Janabat and when he learns later that actually the time was short, he performs tayammum, his fast will be in order. And if he presumes without any investigation that he has enough time at his disposal and gets into Janabat and when he learns later that the time was short, keeps the fast with tayammum, he should, as a recommended precaution, observe the qadha of that fast.

1634. * If a person is in Janabat during a night in Ramadhan and knows that if he goes to sleep he will not wake up till Fajr, he should not sleep before Ghusl and if he sleeps before Ghusl and does not wake up till Fajr, his fast is void, and qadha and Kaffarah become obligatory on him.

1635. When a person in Janabat goes to sleep in a night of Ramadhan and then wakes up, the obligatory precaution is that if he is not sure about waking up again, he should not go to sleep before Ghusl, even if he has a faint hope that he might wake up before Fajr if he sleeps again.

1636. * If a person in Janabat in the night of Ramadhan feels certain that if he goes to sleep he will wake up before the time of Fajr prayers, and is determined to do Ghusl upon waking up, and oversleeps with that determination till the time of Fajr prayers, his fast will be in order. And the same rule applies to a person who, though not absolutely certain, is hopeful about waking up before the time of Fajr prayers.

1637. If a person in Janabat in a night of Ramadhan is certain or reasonably hopeful that if he sleeps he will wake up before the time of Fajr prayers but he is not heedful of the fact that after waking up he would do Ghusl , if he oversleeps till the time of Fajr prayers, the qadha of that fast will be obligatory on him as a precaution.

1638. * If a person in Janabat in a night of Ramadhan is sure or fairly hopeful that if he sleeps he will wake up before the time of Fajr prayers, but he does not intend to do Ghusl then, or is undecided about it , his fast is void.. And if he sleeps and does not wake up the qadha and Kaffarah will be obligatory on him.

1639. * If a person in Janabat sleeps and wakes up during a night of Ramadhan and is certain or fairly hopeful that if he sleeps again, he will wake up before the time of Fajr prayers, with full determination to do Ghusl after waking up, and oversleeps till the time of Fajr, he should observe the qadha of the fast of that day. And if he goes to sleep for the third time and does not wake up till the time of Fajr prayers, it is obligatory on him to observe the qadha as well as give the kaffarah, as a recommended precaution.

1640. When a person becomes Mohtalim during sleep, the first, second and third sleep means the sleep after waking up; and the sleep in which he became Mohtalim will not be reckoned to be the first sleep.

1641. If a person observing fast becomes Mohtalim during day time, it is not obligatory on him to do Ghusl at once.

1642. When a person wakes up in the month of Ramadhan after the Fajr prayers and finds that he has become Mohtalim his fast is in order, even if he knows that he became Mohtalim before the Fajr prayers.

1643. * When a person who wants to observe the qadha of Ramadhan, remains in Janabat intentionally till the time of Fajr prayers, he cannot fast on that day. And if it was not intentional, he can fast, but as a precaution, it should be avoided.

1644. * If a person wants to observe the qadha of Ramadhan and wakes up after the time of Fajr prayers finding himself Mohtalim, and knows that he became Mohtalim before the time Fajr prayers, he can fast on that day with the niyyat of qadha.

1645. If a person remains in Janabat intentionally till the time of Fajr prayers in an obligatory fast which does not have fixed days, like, the fast of Kaffarah, apparently his fast is in order, but it is better that he should observe fast on some other day.

1646. * If a woman becomes Pak from Haidth or Nifas before the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadhan or, as a precaution, on a day she wants to give qadha of Ramadhan, and does not do Ghusl - or in the case of time being short, tayammum - intentionally, her fast will be void. And if it is not the fast of Ramadhan or its qadha, her fast will be in order, but as a precaution, she should do Ghusl. And if the obligation of a woman is tayammum instead of Ghusl for Haidth or Nifas and she does not do it intentionally, in the month of Ramadhan or for its qadha, before the time of Fajr prayers, her fast is void.

1647. * If a woman becomes Pak from Haidh or Nifas before the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadhan and she has no time to do Ghusl, she should perform tayammum. But it is not necessary for her to remain awake till the time of Fajr prayers. The same rule applies to a person whose obligation is tayammum after getting into the state of Janabat.

1648. If a woman gets Pak from Haidh or Nifas just near the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadhan, and has no time left for Ghusl or tayammum, her fast is valid.

1649. If a woman gets Pak from Haidh or Nifas after the Fajr or if Haidh or Nifas begins during the day though just near the Maghrib time, her fast is void.

1650. If a woman forgets to do Ghusl for Haidh or Nifas and remembers it after a day or more, the fasts that she has observed will be valid.

1651. * If a woman gets Pak from Haidh or Nifas before the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadhan but neglects her obligation and does not do Ghusl before Fajr, nor does she resort to tayammum as time becomes short, her fast will be void. But if she is not negligent, like when she waits for her turn in a public bath, then even if she sleeps three times without doing Ghusl till Fajr, her fast will be valid if she does not ignore tayammum.

1652. * If a woman is in a state of excessive Istihadha, her fast will be valid even if she does not carry out the rules of Ghusls as explained in rule no. 402. Similarly, her fast will be in order if she does not do the Ghusls prescribed for medium Istihadha.

1653. A person who has touched a dead body (i.e. has brought any part of his own body in contact with it) can observe fast without having done Ghusl for touching a dead body, and his fast does not become void even if he touches the dead body during the fast.

VIII. Enema

1654. If liquid enema is taken by a fasting person, his fast becomes void even if he is obliged to take it for the sake of treatment.

IX. Vomiting

1655. If a fasting person vomits intentionally his fast becomes void, though he may have been obliged to do so on account of sickness. However, the fast does not become void, if one vomits forgetfully or involuntarily.

1656. * If a person eats something at night knowing that it will cause vomiting during the day time, the recommended precaution is that he should give the qadha of that fast.

1657. * If a fasting person can stop vomiting without causing any harm or inconvenience to himself, he should exercise restraint.

1658. * If a fly enters the throat of a fasting person, it will not be necessary to throw it out if it has gone deep down the gullet, and his fast will be valid. But if it has not descended deep down, it must be coughed out, even by vomiting, if it is not harmful to do so. If one does not do so, fast will be void.

1659. If a person swallows something by mistake and remembers before it reaches the stomach that he is fasting, it is not necessary for him to throw it out, and his fast is in order.

1660. If a fasting person is certain that if he belches, something will come out from the throat, he should not, as a precaution, belch intentionally, but there is no harm in his belching if he is not certain about it.

1661. If a fasting person belches and something comes from his throat or into the mouth, he should throw it out, and if it is swallowed unintentionally, his fast is in order.

Rules Regarding Things which Invalidate a Fast

1662. * If a person intentionally and voluntarily commits an act which invalidates fast, his fast becomes void, but if he does not commit such an act intentionally, there is no harm in it (i.e. his fast is valid). However, if a person in Janabat sleeps and does not do Ghusl till the time of Fajr prayers, as detailed in rule no. 1639, his fast is void. Similarly, if a person due to utter ignorance of the rule that a certain act will invalidate the fast, or due to reliance upon some authority which he thought was genuine, unhesitatingly commits an act which invalidates the fast, his fast will not be void, except in the cases of eating, drinking and sexual intercourse.

1663. * If a fasting person forgetfully commits an act which invalidates fast and thinking that since his fast has become void, commits intentionally another act which invalidates fast, his fast will be void.

1664. * If something is dropped forcibly down the throat of a fasting person, his fast does not become void. But, if he is compelled to break his fast by intimidation, like, if he is warned that his life or wealth would be at stake, and he willingly breaks the fast to ward off the danger, his fast will be void.

1665. * A fasting person should not go to a place where he knows that something will be put down his throat or that he will be compelled to break his fast by his own hands. And if he goes there and he is compelled to commit an act by his own hands which invalidates a fast, his fast will be void. The same will apply, as an obligatory precaution, if something is forcibly put down his throat.

Fasting (Part II of II)

Things which are Makrooh for a Person Observing Fast

1666. * Certain things are Makrooh for a person observing fast, some of them are mentioned below :

(i) Using eyedrops and applying Surma if its taste or smell reaches the throat.

(ii) Performing an act, which causes weakness, like blood-letting (extracting the blood from the body) or going for hot bath.

(iii) Inhaling a snuff if one is not aware that it might reach the throat; and if one is aware that it will reach the throat its use is not permissible.

(iv) Smelling fragrant herbs.

(v) For women, to sit in the water.

(vi) Using suppository, that is, letting into rectum a stimulant for bowels.

(vii) Wetting the dress which one is wearing.

(viii) Getting a tooth extracted or doing something as a result of which there is bleeding in the mouth.

(ix) Cleaning the teeth with a wet toothbrush.

(x) Putting water or any other liquid in the mouth without a good cause.

It is also Makrooh for a fasting person to court or woo his wife without the intention of ejaculation; or to do something which excites him sexually. And if he does it with the intention of ejaculation, and no ejaculation takes place, his fast, as an obligatory precaution, will be deemed void.

Obligatory Qadha Fast and Kaffarah

1667. * In the following situations, both qadha and Kaffarah become obligatory, provided these acts are committed intentionally, voluntarily and without any force or pressure, during the fasts of Ramadhan:

(i) Eating

(ii) Drinking

(iii) Sexual Intercourse

(iv) Masturbation

(v) Staying in the state of Janabat till the time of Fajr prayers

And as a recommended precaution, invalidating the fast due to reasons other than those mentioned above, should also be recompensed with Kaffarah, besides the obligatory qadha.

1668. * If a person commits any of the foregoing acts with an absolute certitude that it does not invalidate fast, Kaffarah will not be obligatory on him.

Kaffarah for Fast

1669. * The Kaffarah of leaving out a fast of Ramadhan is to:

(a) free a slave, or (b) fast for two months or (c) feed sixty poor to their fill or give one mudd (= 3/4 kg.) of food-stuff, like, wheat or barley or bread etc. to each of them. And if it is not possible for him to fulfil any of these, he should give Sadaqa according to his means and seek Divine forgiveness. And the obligatory precaution is that he should give Kaffarah as and when he is capable to do so.

1670. A person who intends fasting for two months as a Kaffarah for a fast of Ramadhan, should fast continuously for one month and one day, and it would not matter if he did not maintain continuity for completion of the remaining fasts.

1671. * A person who intends fasting for two months as a Kaffarah for a fast of Ramadhan, should not commence fasting at such time when he knows that within a month and one day, days like Eid-ul-Azha will fall when it would be haraam to fast.

1672. If a person who must fast continuously, fails to fast on any day in the period without any just excuse, he should commence fasting all over again.

1673. * If a person who must fast continuously, is unable to maintain the continuity due to an excuse beyond control, like, Haidh or Nifas or a journey, which one is obliged to undertake, it will not be obligatory on him/her after the excuse is removed, to commence fasting again from the beginning. He/she should proceed to observe the remaining fasts.

1674. * If a person breaks his fast with something haraam, whether it is haraam in itself, like, wine or adultery or has become haraam due to some reason like, any food which is normally permissible but it is injurious to his health, or if he has sexual intercourse with his wife during Haidth, he will have to observe all the three Kaffarah, as a recommended precaution. It means that he should set free a slave, fast for two months and also feed sixty poor to their fill, or give one mudd of wheat, barley, bread etc. to each of them. If it is not possible for him to give all the three Kaffarah, he should perform any one Kaffarah which he can possibly give.

1675. * If a fasting person intentionally imputes lies to Allah or the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the recommended precaution is that he should give all the three Kaffarah as detailed above.

1676. * If a fasting person engages in sexual intercourse several times a day during Ramadhan or commits masturbation, one Kaffarah becomes obligatory on him. But, as a recommended precaution, he should give a Kaffarah each time he engages in sexual intercourse.

1677. * If a fasting person repeats an act which invalidates fast of Ramadhan other than sexual intercourse and masturbation, one Kaffarah will be sufficient for all.

1678. * If a fasting person commits an act which invalidates a fast other than sexual intercourse, and then has sexual intercourse with his wife, one Kaffarah will suffice for both the acts.

1679. * If a fasting person commits a halal act to invalidate a fast, like, if he drinks water and thereafter commits another act which is haraam and invalidates a fast, like, if he eats haraam food, one Kaffarah will suffice.

1680. * If a fasting person belches and swallows intentionally that which comes in his mouth, his fast becomes void, and he should give its qadha and Kaffarah also. And if the thing which comes to his mouth is haraam to consume, like, blood or some food which no more looks like food, and he swallows it intentionally, he will give the qadha of that fast, and as a recommended precaution, give all the three Kaffarah.

1681. If a person takes a vow that he would fast on a particular day, and if he invalidates his fast intentionally on that day, he should give Kaffarah, the one for which one becomes liable upon breaking a vow. The details will come in the relevant Chapter.

1682. If a fasting person breaks his fast when someone unreliable informs him that Maghrib has set in, and he later learns that Maghrib had not set in, or doubts whether it had set in or not, it is obligatory on him to give qadha and Kaffarah.

1683. If a person who has intentionally invalidated his fast travels after Zuhr or before Zuhr to escape the Kaffarah, he will not be exempted from the Kaffarah. In fact, if he has to proceed unexpectedly on a journey before Zuhr, even then it is obligatory for him to give Kaffarah.

1684. If a person invalidates the fast intentionally and then an excuse like Haidth, Nifas or sickness arises, the recommended precaution is that he/she should give a Kaffarah.

1685. If a person was certain that it was the first day of Ramadhan and invalidated his fast intentionally, and it transpired later that it was the last day of Sha'ban it would not be obligatory on him to give Kaffarah.

1686. If a person doubts whether it is the last day of Ramadhan or the first day of Shawwal and invalidates his fast intentionally, and it transpires later that it is the first day of Shawwal, it will not be obligatory on him to give Kaffarah.

1687. * If a man who is fasting in the month of Ramadhan has sexual intercourse with his wife who is also fasting and if he has compelled her for that, he should give Kaffarah for his own fast and as a precaution, also for his wife's. And if she had wilfully consented to the sexual intercourse, a Kaffarah becomes obligatory on each of them.

1688. If a woman compels her fasting husband to have sexual intercourse with her, it is not obligatory on her to give Kaffarah for her husband's fast.

1689. If a man who is fasting in Ramadhan compels his wife for sexual intercourse, and if the woman expresses her agreement during the intercourse, the man should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, give two Kaffarah and the woman should give one Kaffarah.

1690. If a man who is observing fast in Ramadhan has sexual intercourse with his fasting wife who is asleep, one Kaffarah becomes obligatory on him. But the wife's fast is in order and she will not give any Kaffarah.

1691. If a man compels his wife or a woman compels her husband to commit an act which makes the fast void, other than the sexual intercourse, it will not be obligatory upon any of them to give any Kaffarah.

1692. A man who does not observe fast due to travelling or illness, cannot compel his fasting wife to have sexual intercourse. But, if he compels her, Kaffarah will not be obligatory on him either.

1693. One should not be negligent about giving Kaffarah. But, it is not necessary to give it immediately.

1694. If Kaffarah has become obligatory on a person and if he fails to fulfil it for some years, no increase in the Kaffarah takes place.

1695. * When a person is required to feed sixty poor by way of Kaffarah for one fast, and if he has access to all of them, he cannot give to any one of them more than one mudd of

food, or feed a poor man more than once, calculating it as feeding more than one person. However, he can give to a poor person one mudd of food for each member of his family, even if they may be minors.

1696. * If a person offering qadha of a fast of Ramadhan intentionally breaks his fast after Zuhr, he should give food to ten poor persons, one mudd to each, and if he cannot do this, he should observe fast for three days.

Occasions on which it is Obligatory to Observe the Qadha Only

1697. * In the following cases it is obligatory on a person to observe a qadha fast only and it is not obligatory on him to give a Kaffarah:

(i) If a person is in Janabat during a night of Ramadhan and as detailed in rule no. 1639 does not wake up from his second sleep till the time of Fajr prayers.

(ii) If he does not commit an act which invalidates a fast but did not make Niyyat to observe fast, or fasts to show off intends not to fast at all, or decides to commit an act which invalidates a fast, then as an obligatory precaution, he must give its qadha.

(iii) If he forgets to do Ghusl of Janabat during the month of Ramadhan and fasts for one or more days in the state of Janabat.

(iv) If in the month of Ramadhan, a man without investigating as to whether Fajr has set in or not commits an act, which invalidates a fast, and it becomes known later that it was Fajr, he should as a precaution and with the Niyyat of Qurbat, refrain from committing any further acts which invalidate the fast, and give its qadha also.

(v) If someone else informs that it is not Fajr yet, and on the basis of his statement one commits an act which invalidates a fast and it is later found out that it was Fajr.

(vi) If someone informs that it is Fajr and not believing his word or thinking that the fellow is joking, he commits, without investigating, an act which invalidates a fast and it becomes known later that it was Fajr.

(vii) If a blind person, or any one like him, breaks his fast relying on the statement of another person, and it is known later that Maghrib had not set in.

(viii) When a person is certain that Maghrib has set in, and breaks his feet accordingly, and later he learns that it was not Maghrib, he must give qadha. But if he believed that Maghrib had set in because of cloudy weather, and broke his fast, and later it became evident that Maghrib had not set in, he will observe qadha of that fast as a precautionary measure.

(ix) When one rinses his mouth with water because it has dried due to thirst and the water uncontrollably goes down one's throat, qadha has to be given. Similarly, as a recommended precaution, one should give a qadha if the mouthwash was for a wudhu for Mustahab prayers, and the water went down the throat. But if he forgets that he has kept a fast, or if he does the mouthwash, not because of thirst, but for a wudhu for an obligatory prayers and water is uncontrollably swallowed, there will be no qadha.

(x) If a person breaks his fast due to duress, helplessness or taqayyah, he will observe qadha of the fast, but it is not obligatory on him to give a Kaffarah.

1698. If a fasting person puts something other than water in his mouth and it goes down the throat involuntarily, or puts water in his nose and it goes down involuntarily, it will not be obligatory on him to observe qadha of the fast.

1699. It is Makrooh to do excessive mouth washing for a fasting person, and after the mouthwash if he wishes to swallow saliva, it is better that he spits it out three times before doing so.

1700. * If a person knows or feels that if he does a mouthwash water will seep down his throat involuntarily, he should avoid it. And as an obligatory precaution, he should avoid the mouthwash if he knows or feels that water may trickle down his throat due to his own forgetfulness.

1701. * If in the month of Ramadhan, a person becomes sure after investigation that it is not Fajr and commits an act which invalidates a fast, and it is later known that it was Fajr already, it will not be necessary for him to offer qadha of that fast.

1702. If a person doubts whether or not Maghrib has set in, he cannot break his fast. But if he doubts whether or not it is Fajr he can commit, even before investigation, an act which invalidates a fast.

Rules Regarding the Qadha Fasts

1703. If an insane recovers and becomes sane, it will not be obligatory on him to offer qadha for the fasts which he did not observe when he was insane.

1704. If an unbeliever becomes a Muslim, it is not obligatory on him to offer qadha for the fasts of the period during which he was an unbeliever. However, if a Muslim apostatises and becomes Muslim again, he must observe qadha for the fasts of the period during which he remained an apostate.

1705. A person must offer qadha for the fasts left out due to being intoxicated, even if the intoxicant was taken by him for the purpose of medical treatment.

1706. If a person did not fast on certain days because of some excuse and later doubts about the exact date on which the excuse was over, it will not be obligatory on him to offer qadha basing his calculation on the higher number. For example, if a person travelled before the commencement of the month of Ramadhan, and now does not remember whether he returned on the 5th of Ramadhan or on the 6th, or if he travelled in the last days of the month of Ramadhan and returned after Ramadhan, and now does not remember whether he travelled on the 25th of Ramadhan or on the 26th, in both the cases, he can observe qadha based on the lesser number of days, that is, five days. However, the recommended precaution is that he should offer qadha for the higher number of days, that is, six days.

1707. If a person has to give qadha for Ramadhan fasts of several years, he can begin with the qadha of Ramadhan of any year as he likes. But, if the time for qadha fasts of the last Ramadhan is short, like, if he has to observe five qadha fasts of the last Ramadhan

and only five days are left before the commencement of approaching Ramadhan, it is better to observe qadha fasts of last Ramadhan.

1708. If a person has qadha fasts of the month of Ramadhan for several years, and while making Niyyat he does not specify to which year the fasts belong, they will not be reckoned to be the qadha of the last year.

1709. A person who observes a qadha for the fast of Ramadhan can break his fast before Zuhr. However, if the time for qadha fast is short, it is better not to break it.

1710. If a person observes qadha fast of a dead person, it is better not to break the fast after Zuhr.

1711. * If a person does not observe the fasts of the month of Ramadhan due to illness, Haidh or Nifas and dies before he/she can give qadha in time, he/she will not have any qadha liability.

1712. * If a person does not fast in the month of Ramadhan due to illness and his illness continues till next Ramadhan, it is not obligatory on him to observe qadha of the fasts which he had not observed, but for each fast he should give one mudd of food like, wheat, barley, bread etc. to poor. And if he did not observe fast owing to some other excuse, like, if he did not fast because of travelling and his excuse continued till next Ramadhan, he should observe its qadha fasts, and the obligatory precaution is that for each day he should give one mudd of food to poor.

1713. If a person did not fast in Ramadhan due to illness, and his illness ended after Ramadhan, but there emerged another excuse due to which he could not observe the qadha fasts till next Ramadhan, he should offer qadha for the fasts which he did not observe. Also, if he had an excuse other than illness during Ramadhan, and that excuse ended after Ramadhan, but he then fell ill and could not give qadha till next Ramadhan because of that illness, he will offer the qadha for the fasts he did not observe and, on the basis of obligatory precaution, he will give one mudd of food to poor for each day.

1714. If a person does not observe fasts in the month of Ramadhan owing to some excuse and his excuse is removed after Ramadhan, yet he does not observe the qadha fasts intentionally till next Ramadhan, he has to give qadha of the fasts and should also give one mudd of food to poor for each fast.

1715. * If a person deliberately ignores observing qadha till the time left is short, and during that short time he develops an excuse, he has to give qadha and as a precaution, give one mudd of food to poor for each day. Similarly, if after the excuse is over, he firmly decides to give qadha, but is unable to do so because of some fresh excuse during that short time, he will follow the above rule.

1716. If the illness of a person continues for very long, protracted over many years, he should, after being cured, observe the qadha fasts of the last Ramadhan, and for each day of the earlier years he should give one mudd of food to poor.

1717. A person who has to give one mudd of food to poor for each day, can give food of Kaffarah of a few days to one poor person.

1718. If a person delays observing qadha fasts of the month of Ramadhan for a few years, he should give the qadha and should on account of delay in the first year, give one mudd of food to a poor person for each day. As for the delay in the subsequent years, nothing is obligatory on him.

1719. * If a person does not observe fasts of the month of Ramadhan intentionally, he should give their qadha and for each day left out, he should observe fast for two months or feed sixty poor persons or set a slave free, and if he does not observe the qadha till next Ramadhan, he should also give one mudd of food for each day as a Kaffarah.

1720. * If a person does not observe fast of the month of Ramadhan intentionally, and commits sexual intercourse or masturbation several times during the day, the Kaffarah does not multiply together with it. Similarly, if he performs other acts which invalidate the fast, like eating several times, one Kaffarah will suffice.

1721. * After the death of a person his eldest son, as an obligatory precaution, should observe his qadha fasts as explained in connection with the prayers earlier.

1722. * If a father had not observed obligatory fasts other than the fasts of the month of Ramadhan, like, a fast of Nadhr, the recommended precaution is that his eldest son should observe its qadha. However, if the father was hired for observing fasts on behalf of a dead person, but he did not observe them, it is not obligatory for the eldest son to offer them.

Fasting by a Traveller

1723. A traveller for whom it is obligatory to shorten a four Rak'ats prayers to two Rak'ats, should not fast. However, a traveller who offers full prayers, like, a person who is a traveller by profession or who goes on a journey for a haraam purpose, should fast while travelling.

1724. There is no harm in travelling during the month of Ramadhan, but it is Makrooh to travel during the month to evade fasting. And similarly, it is Makrooh to travel before the 24th of Ramadhan unless travelling is undertaken for the purpose of Hajj or Umrah or for some important work.

1725. * If it is obligatory on a person to observe a particular fast other than the fasts of Ramadhan, like, if he has undertaken to fast on behalf of someone against payment, or if it is the fast of the third day of I'tekaf, he cannot travel on that day, and if he is already on journey then he should make a Niyyat to stay there for ten days, if possible, and keep the fast. And if it is an obligatory fast of Nadhr, travelling on that day is permissible, and it is not necessary to make an intention of staying there for ten days. Though, it is better not to travel unless it is absolutely necessary, and if he is already on a journey, he should have the Niyyat to stay there for 10 days.

1726. If a person makes a vow to observe a Mustahab fast and does not specify any day for it, he cannot keep the fast while travelling. However, if he makes a vow that he will observe fast on a particular day during a journey, he should observe that fast during the journey. Also, if he makes a vow that he will observe a fast on a particular day, whether he is journeying on that day or not, he should observe the fasts on that day even if he travels.

1727. A traveller can observe Mustahab fasts in Madinah for three days with the Niyyat of praying for the fulfilment of his wish, and as a precaution, those three days be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

1728. If a person does not know that the fast of a traveller is invalid and observes fast while journeying, and learns about the rule during the day, his fast becomes void, but if he does not learn about the rule till Maghrib, his fast is valid.

1729. If a person forgets that he is a traveller or forgets that the fast of a traveller is void, and observes fast while journeying, is fast is invalid.

1730. * If a fasting person travels after Zuhr, he should, as a precaution, complete his fast. If he travels before Zuhr and had an intention from the previous night to do so, he cannot fast on that day. As a precaution, he cannot fast on that day even if he had no intention to travel from the previous night. In both the cases, he cannot break the fast till he has reached the limit of Tarakkhus. If he does, he will be liable to give Kaffarah.

1731. If a traveller in the month of Ramadhan, regardless of whether he was travelling before Fajr, or was fasting and then undertook the journey, reaches his hometown before Zuhr or a place where he intends to stay for ten days, and if has not committed an act which invalidates a fast, he should fast on that day. But if he has committed such an act, it is not obligatory on him to fast on that day.

1732. * If a traveller reaches his hometown after Zuhr, or a place where he intends to stay for ten days, he cannot fast on that day.

1733. It is Makrooh for a traveller and for a person who cannot fast owing to some excuse, to have sexual intercourse or to eat or drink to his fill, during the day time in Ramadhan.

People on Whom Fasting is Not Obligatory

1734. Fasting is not obligatory on a person who cannot fast because of old age, or for whom fasting causes extreme hardship. But in latter case, he should give one mudd food to a poor person for every fast.

1735. If a person who did not fast during the month of Ramadhan owing to old age, becomes capable of fasting later, he should, on the basis of recommended precaution, give the qadha.

1736. * Fasting is not obligatory on a person who suffers from a disease which causes excessive thirst, making it unbearable, or full of hardship. But in the latter case, that is, of hardship, he should give one mudd of food to poor, for every fast. At the same time, as a recommended precaution, such a person may not drink water in a quantity more than essential. If he recovers later, enabling him to fast, then as a recommended precaution, he should give qadha for the fast.

1737. * Fasting is not obligatory on a woman in advanced stage of pregnancy, for whom fasting is harmful or for the child she carries. For every day, however, she should give one mudd of food to poor. In both the cases, she has to give qadha for the fasts which are left out.

1738. * If a woman is suckling a child, whether she is the mother or a nurse, or suckles it free, and the quantity of her milk is small, and if fasting is harmful to her or to the child, it will not be obligatory on her to fast. And she should give one mudd of food per day to poor. In both the cases, she will later give qadha for the fasts left out. But this rule is specifically applicable in a circumstance where this is the only way of feeding milk to the child - (as an obligatory precaution). But if there is an alternative, like, when more than one woman offer to suckle the child, then establishing this rule is a matter of Ishkal.

Method of Ascertaining the First Day of a Month

1739. * The 1st day of a month is established in the following four ways:

(i) If a person himself sights the moon.

(ii) If a number of persons confirm to have sighted the moon and their words assure or satisfy a person. Similarly, every other thing which assures or satisfies him about moon having being sighted.

(iii) If two just (Adil) persons say that they have sighted the moon at night. The first day of the month will not be established if they differ about the details of the new moon. This difference can be either explicit or even implied. For example, when a group of people goes out in search of a new moon and none but two Adils claim to have seen the new moon, though, among those who did not see, there were other Adils equally capable and knowledgeable, then the testimony by the first two Adils will not prove the advent of a new month.

(iv) If 30 days pass from the first of Sha'ban , the 1st of Ramadhan will be established, and if 30 days pass from the 1st of Ramadhan the 1st of Shawwal will be established.

1740. The 1st day of any month will not be proved by the verdict of a Mujtahed and it is better to observe precaution.

1741. The first day of a month will not be proved by the prediction made by the astronomers. However, if a person derives full satisfaction and certitude from their findings, he should act accordingly.

1742. * If the moon is high up in the sky, or sets late, it is not an indication that the previous night was the first night of the month. Similarly, if there is a halo round it, it is not a proof that the new moon appeared in the previous night.

1743. If the first day of the month of Ramadhan is not proved for a person and he does not observe fast, and if it is proved later that the preceding night was infact the night of Ramadhan, he should observe qadha of that day.

1744. * If the first day of a month is proved in a city, it is also proved in other cities if they are united in their horizon. And the meaning of having a common horizon in this matter is that if new moon was sighted in a city, there would be a distinct possibility of sighting it in the other cities, if there were no impediments, like, the clouds etc.

1745. The first day of a month is not proved by a telegram except when one is sure that the telegram is based on the testimony of two Adils, or on a source which is reliable in the eyes of Shariah.

1746. If a person does not know whether it is the last day of Ramadhan or the first of Shawwal, he should observe fast on that day, and if he comes to know during the day that it is the first of Shawwal, he should break the fast.

1747. * If a prisoner cannot ascertain the advent of Ramadhan, he should act on probability and he should act on a probability which in his estimation is stronger. But if even that is not possible, he may consider a month which he strongly feels to be Ramadhan and fast; however, he should keep that month in view so that if it later transpires that he kept fasts before Ramadhan, he will give the qadha. And if it transpired that it was Ramadhan or after it, he does not have any liability of qadha.

Haraam and Makrooh Fasts

1748. It is haraam to fast on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha. It is also haraam to fast with the Niyyat of first fast of Ramadhan on a day about which he is not sure whether it is the last day of Sha'ban or the first of Ramadhan.

1749. It is haraam for a wife to keep a Mustahab fast if by so doing she would not be able to attend to her duties to her husband. And the obligatory precaution is that even if she can attend to her duties towards her husband, she should not observe a Mustahab fast without his permission.

1750. * It is haraam for the children to observe a Mustahab fast if it causes emotional suffering to their parents.

1751. * If a son observes a Mustahab fast without the permission of his father, and his father prohibits him from it during the day time, the son should break the fast if his disobedience would hurt the feeling of his father.

1752. * If a person knows that fasting is not harmful to him, he should fast even if his doctor advises that it is harmful. And if a person is certain or has a feeling that fasting is harmful to him, he should not fast even if the doctor advises for it, and if he fasts in these circumstances, his fast will not be valid if it turns out that the fast was actually harmful, or if it was not kept with the Niiyyat of Qurbat.

1753. * If a person has a strong feeling that it is harmful for him to fast, and owing to that feeling, fear is created in his mind, and if that feeling is commonly acceptable, he should not observe fast, and if he does, it will not be valid in the way described in the foregoing rule.

1754. If a person who believes that fasting is not harmful to him, observes fast and realises after Maghrib that it was considerably harmful to him, he should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, give the qadha of that day.

1755. Besides the fasts mentioned herein, there are other haraam fasts also, the details of which are found in relevant books.

1756. It is Makrooh to fast on 'Ashura (10th of Muharram). It is also Makrooh to fast on the day about which one is not sure whether it is the day of 'Arafa or Eid-ul-Azha.

Mustahab Fasts

1757.* Fasting is Mustahab on every day of a year except those on which it is haraam or Makrooh to observe a fast. Some of them which have been strongly recommended, are mentioned here:

(i) The first and last Thursday of every month and the first Wednesday after the 10th of a month. If a person does not observe these fasts it is Mustahab that he gives their qadha. And if he is incapable of fasting, it is Mustahab for him to give one mudd of food or prescribed coined silver to poor.

(ii) 13th, 14th and 15th day of every month.

(iii) On all days of Rajab and Shaban or on as many days as it is possible to fast, even though it may be one day only.

(iv) The day of Eid Nawroz.

(v) From the 4th up to the 9th of the month of Shawwal.

(vi) The 25th and 29th day of the month of Zi qa'da.

(vii) From the 1st day to the 9th day (i.e. 'Arafa day) of the month of Zil hajj. But if, it is not possible for one to recite the Duas of 'Arafa due to weakness caused by fasting, it is Makrooh to fast on that day.

(viii) The auspicious day of Ghadir (18th Zil hajj).

(ix) The auspicious day of Mubahala (24th Zil hajj).

(x) The 1st, 3rd and 7th day of Muharram.

(xi) The birthday of the Holy Prophet (17th Rabi'ul awwal).

(xii) 15th day of Jumadi'ul oola.

Fasting is also recommended on 27th of Rajab - the day the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared his Prophethood.

If a person observes a Mustahab fast, it is not obligatory on him to complete it. In fact, if one of his brethren-in-faith invites him to a meal, it is Mustahab that he accepts the invitation and breaks the fast during the day time even if it may be after Zuhr.

Mustahab Precautions

1758. It is Mustahab for the following persons that even if they may not be fasting, they should refrain from those acts in the month of Ramadhan which invalidate a fast:

(i) A traveller who has committed an act during his journey which makes a fast void and reaches his hometown before Zuhr, or the place where he intends to stay for ten days.

(ii) A traveller who reaches home after Zuhr or at a place where he intends to stay for ten days. The same rule applies if he reaches such places before Zuhr and if he has already broken his fast while journeying.

(iii) A patient who recovers after Zuhr or even if he recovers before noon, though he may have committed acts which invalidate fast. And if he has not committed any such act, then his obligation has been explained in rule no. 1576.

(iv) A woman who becomes Pak from Haidh or Nifas during day time.

1759. It is Mustahab that a person breaks his fast after offering Maghrib and Isha prayers. However, if he feels terribly inclined to eat, so much that he cannot concentrate on the prayers, or if someone is waiting for him, it is better that he should break his fast first and offer the prayers later. However, as far as possible, he should try to offer the prayers during the prime time (Fadheelat).

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MUSLIMS IN THE WEST

Sawm: Fasting

Introduction

The noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) gave an impressive sermon welcoming the month of Ramadhãn. He said:

"O people! The month of Allãh with its blessings, mercy and forgiveness has come upon you. It is the most preferred of all the months with Allãh; its days are the best of days, its nights are the best of nights, and its hours are the best of hours. It is a month in which you have been invited as guests of Allãh and have been placed among those honoured by Allãh. Your breathing in it is [like] an act of praising [Allãh], your sleep an act of worship; your good deeds are accepted, and your prayers answered. Therefore, ask Allãh with sincere intentions and pure hearts to help you in fasting and recitating His Book during this [month]. Indeed damned is he who is deprived of Allãh's forgiveness during this august month.

"O people! The gates of Paradise are wide open during this month; therefore, ask your Lord not to close them in your face and the gates of Hell-Fire are locked; therefore, ask your Lord not to open them for you. Satans are chained; therefore, ask your Lord not to unfetter them upon you.

"O people! Whosoever among you improves his character during this month, he shall have the pass [to cross] over the Bridge *(sirãt)* on the day when [people's] feet shall slip. Whosoever is lenient with his slaves during this month, Allãh will be lenient with him in the reckoning of his [deeds on the Day of Judgement]. Whosoever checks his evil deeds during this month, Allãh shall withhold His anger from him on the day he meets Him. Whosoever honours an orphan during this month, Allãh shall honour him on the day he meets Him. Whosoever maintains, during this month, contact with his relations, Allãh will maintain His mercy for him on the day he meets Him. Whosoever recites a verse from the Qur'ãn during this month, his reward will be like one who has completed the recitation of the Qur'ãn during the other months."

Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said, “There are some who fast but will gain nothing from their fasting except thirst; and there are some who pray but will gain nothing from their prayer except tiredness.”

Imam as-Sãdiq (a.s.) said, “When you fast, your ears, eyes, hair, skin, and all your limbs should also fast.” He also said, “Fasting is not only [abstaining] from food and drink alone. When you fast, protect your tongue from lying; lower your eye-glances from what Allãh has forbidden [you to see]; do not fight with one another; do not be jealous of one another; do not backbite one another; do not abuse one another; and do not be unjust to one another. Refrain from false accusation, lying, fighting, suspicion, backbiting, and slandering. Be those who look forward to the hereafter, and wait for your days, waiting for what Allãh has promised for those who have prepared to meet Allãh. You must have tranquility, sobriety, humility, servility, and submissiveness of a slave who fears his master; and be fearful [of Allãh’s chastisement] as well as hopeful [in His forgiveness].”*

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* For these and other similar ahadith in the books of hadith and in Mafatihu 'l-Jinan of 'Abbas al-Qummi, p. 235-237.

General Rules

It is appropriate now to explain some rules of fasting, and append to them the specific questions and answers concerning this important Islamic ritual.

98. Among the acts that invalidate fasting is intentionally **eating and drinking**. So, if a person who is fasting eats or drinks by mistake (e.g., he forgot that he was fasting) and not intentionally, his fasting is in order and there is no penalty upon him.

99. Among the acts that invalidate fasting of Ramdhãn is intentionally staying in a state of ***janãbat*** until the beginning of true dawn. So if such a person intentionally remains in that state without performing major ablution *(ghusl)* until the beginning of the true dawn in the month of Ramadhan, then it is obligatory upon him to refrain from the forbidden things for the remaining of the day. (As a matter of obligatory precaution one should abstain with the intention of “*ma fidh dhimma* — what is expected of him”.) They should also make up this fast some other day [after Ramadhan] with the intention of “*ma fidh dhimma*” and also incur the penalty, based on obligatory precaution. If a person is sick and cannot perform *ghusl* because of his sickness, he should do *tayammum* before true dawn; thereafter, they will be considered to be in a state of ritual purity. Thus, they will be able to fast.

100. Among the acts that invalidate fasting in the month of Ramadhãn is for a woman to remain until true dawn in a state of ritual impurity caused by menstruation ***(hayz)*** or post-natal bleeding *(nifãs)* after it had stopped and while it was possible for her to do major ablution *(ghusl)*. So if she stays without *ghusl* till the beginning of true dawn, her situation will be the same as that of the person in *janãbat* as mentioned above. If performing *ghusl* was not possible for her, she should take to *tayammum.*

101. It is preferable for the fasting person not to swallow **phlegm** that has reached the mouth, although it is permissible for him to swallow it. Similarly, it is permissible for him to swallow the **saliva** that has gathered in the mouth, even in large quantities.

102. Discharge of **semen** during daytime does not invalidate the fast; and the person should perform *ghusl* for *janãbat* for his *salãt*. So discharge of semen [during daytime] does not invalidate fasting.

103. Washing the teeth with **brush and toothpaste** does not invalidate the fast as long as the person does not swallow the saliva that has mixed with the toothpaste. However, the lingering flavour or taste of the paste that mixes with the saliva does not affect the fasting.

104. If a Muslim lives in a city that has daylight for six months and night for six months [e.g., the **northern part of Europe or Canada**], it is obligatory for him to move during the month of Ramadhãn to a city with 'normal' day and night so that he can start fasting, if not, he should move after that month to fast as *qadhã* (making up the missed fast). However, if it is not possible for him to move, then he has to pay compensation *(fidya)* instead of fasting; that means giving 750 grams of food [rice or flour] to a poor person per day.

105. If a Muslim lives in a city where daylight in some seasons is for 23 hours and the night is only for one hour or vice versa, it is still obligatory on him to fast, if he has the ability to do so. But if he is not able to fast, the obligation is forfieted. If it is possible for him to do *qadhã* later on [e.g., in other seasons or] by moving to another city, it is wãjib for him to do the *qadhã*. If he is unable even to do the *qadhã*, it is obligatory on him to pay *fidya* in lieu of fasting.

Questions and Answers

106. **Question:** Some people come to a city with the intention of residing therein for some years for a specific purpose [e.g., education] During this time, they do not leave their own home-towns for good. When the specific purpose is accomplished, they leave that city and go to wherever they like. How should they do their *salãt* and how should they fast [in that city]?

Answer: They shall pray fully; they can fast after having lived in that city for a month just as they do in their own home-towns.

107. **Question:** Is it permissible to rely on the European observatories [i.e., non-Muslim experts] for determining the timings of true dawn, sunrise, noon, and sunset for the whole year, including the month of Ramadhãn, knowing well that it is scientific and very precise to the minutes and seconds?

Answer: If one is sure of the correctness of their timings, it is permissible to act

upon it. However, one should know that there are some differences in determining the true dawn especially in some of the cities in [northern] Europe [and Canada]; therefore, it is necessary to ascertain that it is based on the proper view.

108. **Question:** In some cities, the sun does not rise at all for days or does not set at all for days or even more. How should we pray and fast?

Answer: As for *salãt*, one should, as a matter of obligatory precaution, observe the closest place that has night and day in a twenty-four hour period, then say *salãt* according to its timings with the intention of *mutlaqa* [i.e., just *qurbatan ilal lah* without specifying whether it is *ada* (on time) or *qadhã* (after time)].
As for fasting, it is obligatory upon you to move during the month of Ramadhãn to another city where you can observe fasting of this holy month, or move to that city after that month to perform it *qadhã*.

109. **Question:** Can a person who is fasting in the holy month of Ramadhãn serve food to non-Muslims?

Answer: By looking at the issue on its own merit, there is no problem in it.

110. **Question:** Would use of a **nozzle spray** that facilitates breathing invalidate the fast?

Answer: If the spray that comes out of the nozzle enters the respiratory tract and not the passage of food and drink, it does not invalidate fast.

111. **Question:** Does the nutrition given, **intravenously** invalidate fast irrespective of whether or not it was absolutely necessary for the patient?

Answer: In both the cases, it does not invalidate the fasting.

112. **Question:** Does **masturbating** during daytime of Ramadhãn invalidate the fast, regardless of whether or not it leads to ejaculation? What is the penalty that should be incurred by one who does so? What is the ruling for a woman who engages in masturbation during daytime of Ramadhãn, irrespective of whether or not it leads to discharge?

Answer: If a person masturbates with the intention of ejaculating and actually ejaculates, his fast is rendered invalid and he must make it up by way of *qadhã* as well as pay the penalty *(kaffãra)* which is fasting for two successive months or feeding sixty poor people. If he masturbates with the intention of ejaculating but does not ejaculate, he must complete the fast with the intention of pleasing the Almighty and then do it *qadhã.*
If he masturbates without the intention of ejaculating and he does not normally ejaculate, knowing that discharge is probable and it actually happens —he has to do *qadhã* without the penalty. However, if such a person was confident that no discharge would take place and it actually happens — no *qadhã* is required. In all these cases, there is no difference between a man and a woman.

113. **Question:** A believer fasts but does not know that intentionally getting into **state of *janãbat*** invalidates fasting—what should he do [when he finds out]?

Answer: It is obligatory on him to make up those fasts; however, there is no

penalty on him as long as he was [erroneously] convinced that being in a state of *janãbat* does not invalidate fast or was unaware of that ruling.

114. **Question:** According to some jurists, a person who intentionally invalidates his fast during the month of Ramadhãn by committing a sin has to pay **all three kinds** of penalty [that is, fasting for sixty days, feeding sixty poor people, and emancipating a slave]. What should a person therefor do during our time when emancipating a slave is impossible since there are virtuallyno slaves?

Answer: The penalty of emancipating a slave is waived when it is no more possible. It should, however, be clarified that in our view, it is not obligatory to pay all three kinds of penalty for invalidating a fast during Ramadhãn by committing a sin. And Allãh knows the best.

115. **Question:** If the **new moon** is sighted in the East, does it apply to us also in the West? And if it is sighted in America, does it apply to Europe also?

Answer: If the new moon is sighted in the East, it also applies to the West as long as the latitude of the two locations are not greatly further away from one another. If the new moon is sighted in the West, it does not apply to the East unless it is proven—even by the moon staying on the first [Western] horizon for the length of time that is longer than the difference between the sunset of the two locations. [For example, if the sunset in the Eastern city was half an hour before the Western city where the moon was sighted, and the moon stays on the horizon longer than half an hour —the Eastern city can follow the moon sighted in the Western city.]

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In *Minhãju 's-Sãliheen,* it says: "The new moon is proven through the knowledge acquired by sighting or recurring reports etc., and through credible reports of its sighting, etc." In ruling No. 1044, it says: "If the new moon is sighted in a city, it is sufficient for other cities, provided they share the same horizon, in the sense that the actual sighting in the first city would necessarily be followed with the sighting in the second city if there were no barriers like clouds, fog, mountains, etc."

In the light of what has been quoted, the following questions arise:

116. **Question:** Would the sighting of the new moon in cities in the East like Iran, Ahsã', Qatíf [both in Arabia], other countries in the Gulf, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon necessarily be followed by its sighting in Western countries like England, France and Germany if there were no barriers like clouds and fog?

Answer: Yes, the sighting of the new moon in an area would necessarily be followed —provided there were no barriers— in places which are located to its west as long as they are not far apart on the latitude lines.

117. **Question:** If the answer to the previous question is positive, would the occurrence of the sighting of the new moon in the view of some religious scholars in Eastern countries be a sufficient evidence for one who is residing in Western countries even though the sighting of the new moon did not occur in those places for lack of clear skies?

Answer: It will not be a sufficient evidence for him or for others. However, if the

occurrence of the sighting from the view point of those religious scholars attracts trustworthiness in that person that the moon was actually sighted or proof was established about the sighting without any counter proof —even in the form of a ruling— that person can act on what he believes is true.

118. **Question:** During certain months, it is declared that the sighting has been proven according to some religious scholars in some Eastern countries. This is based on the testemony of those who have sighted the new moon. Such declarations are usually coupled with the following facts:

a. The witnesses who sighted the moon and who number around thirty, for example, are scattered in various cities such as 2 in Isfahan, 3 in Qum, 2 in Yazd, 4 in Kuwait, 5 in Bahrain, 2 in Ahsã', and 6 in Syria, etc.

b. The sky was clear in a number of cities in the West, and the believers went out in the attempt to sight the moon; and there was nothing preventing the sighting.

c. The observatories in England announced that it was impossible to sight the new moon that evening in England except by using a telescope; and that its sighting with the naked eye would be possible only in the following night. So, what is the ruling in such a case? Please guide us, may Allãh reward you.

Answer: The criterion is the satisfaction of the individual himself [1] about the actual sighting [of the new moon] or [2] the proof of sighting without any counter claim.
In the case mentioned above, satisfaction is not normally achieved concerning the appearance of the new moon on the horizon in such a way that it could have been sighted by the naked eye. On the contrary, one is satisfied that it was not sighted and that the testimony [of sightings in the Eastern cities] is based on illusion and error in sight. And Allãh knows the best.

Q&A from Book Contemporary rulings

Q20: A person fasts in the month of *Ramadan* for several years and he does not know, due to ignorance, that the *ghusl* of *janabah* is obligatory, so he does not perform *ghusl*.

A: His fast is correct and no expiation (*kaffarah*) is obligatory for him. (FM, p. 402)

Q21: Some allergy sufferers use an apparatus which we call an ìinhalatorî to assist them in easy breathing. After its placement in the mouth and pressing it, this apparatus emits what is like pressurized gas. Can this apparatus be used at the time of fasting?

A: Yes. One who uses this (apparatus) remains on his fast and his fast is valid. (FM, p. 402)

Q22: Food or serum in a plastic bag containing water, sugar and some medication is administered to a patient by injection directly into the blood ó due to sickness or some other reasons such as to provide nourishment. Is the fasting person obliged to avoid it?

A: It is not obligatory, although it is more appropriate (for him) to do so. (FM, p. 403)

Q23: Is it permissible to offer meals to those who are not fasting ó that is, those with and without an excuse for not fasting in the month of *Ramadan* ó whether in restaurants or in homes, if this offering is not considered disrespectful to the sanctity of the noble month?

A: It is permissible (to offer meals) to those who have an excuse (for not fasting) [but not to the others]. (FM, pp. 402-3)

Extracts from Jurisprudence made easy

Dialogue on Sawm (fasting)

My father commenced his words on the subject of the month of Ramadhan in a husky trembling voice; the glow in his eyes told of an inner awe for this month. It is no wonder because it brings to mind all that which is good, exquisite, beautiful, blissful, merciful, and forgiving.

To reinforce these concepts, he transported me to the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.), precisely to his famous sermon welcoming the approach of the fasting season, "O people! This is the month of God coming to you with mercy, blessing, and forgiveness; in the sight of Allah, it is the most superior month; its days, nights, and hours are the best. In this month you are the guests of God, enjoying His hospitality. You have been rendered among those who have won His grace. Your every breath shall be deemed utterances of glory to His Name, your sleep a form of worship. Your deeds shall be accepted, your prayers answered. So, with sincerity and pure hearts, pray to your Creator to grant you success in fasting this month and reciting His Book. The wretched is he who is denied the Almighty's forgiveness during this august month.

O men and women! During this month, the gates of everlasting bliss are ajar; so beseech your Lord not to close them off to you. The gates of the Fire are closed; so entreat Him not to open them for you. The devils are in fetters; so implore Him not set them free lest they should lead you astray".

After he related this part of the sermon, he drew my attention to what I should be doing during this month stressing certain parts of the sermon. He went on quoting the Prophet (s.a.w.), "O people! He who provides a meal to a devout Muslim, at the end of his long day fast, during this month, his reward from God shall be as great as that for emancipating a slave, and he can be rest assured of the forgiveness of his past sins".

Someone interjected, "O Prophet of God! Not all of us can afford to provide food for fasting people". He retorted, "Fear God, even with half a date. Feed them, for the sake of God, albeit with a sip of water, because the Almighty grants those a full reward who have done a small deed, if he could not afford to do more.

O people! he who strives, during this month, to deal gently and politely with people, shall be guaranteed passage to paradise, on the Day when many a foot slips (leading to hell). Those who minimize the burden of those in their employ (mulkul yameen), The Lord shall make their reckoning easy. He who checks his transgression, Allah shall withhold His wrath from him on the Day of Judgement. Whoever shuns his kinsmen, Allah shall deny him His mercy on the Day of Reckoning. He who recites just one verse of the Holy Qur'an, during this month, Allah shall grant him the reward of having recited the whole Book in other months".

No sooner had my father finished relating those segments of the Prophet's sermon, he criticised the behaviour of some fasting Muslims who mistakenly believe that fasting is abstaining from food and drink per se. To refute such belief, he quoted Imam Ali (a.s.) as saying, "There is many a fasting man who yields nothing from his fast other than thirst. And how many a worshipper whose night prayer gains him nothing but stress".

He related another hadith from Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.), " When you fast, make sure that your hearing, seeing, hair, skin, and all your faculties refrain (from that which is incompatible with fasting). The Imam was also reported as saying, "Fasting should not be confined to abstaining from food and drink. You should restrain your tongues from telling lies, cast your eyes away from that which Allah has ordained not to be looked at. Do not engage in conflict. Do not envy each other. Do not backbite, swear at or curse one another. Avoid giving false testimony. Be like one who is anticipating to move to the next world, counting in the process your days, waiting for that which God Almighty has promised you, and always taking stock of your deeds in anticipation of having audience with Him. Take to God-inspired peace of mind and dignified bearing; take to submissiveness and humility - the submissiveness of a slave, fearing his master".

My father told me a story that took place at the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.). The Prophet (s.a.w.) heard a woman calling her maid names. He called for food to be served to her. She said that she was fasting. He said to her, "Why are you fasting when you have just called your maid names? Fasting is not simply abstaining from food and drink. It is a means of refraining from committing sins by word and deed. How scarce genuine fasting is and how abundant hunger".

* I felt so humble and said to my father, "It is time I should fast the month of Ramadhan, and I shall start this year. However, what is the way to knowing that the month has started"?

- You should be able to know that by sighting the new moon in your country or nearby countries that share the same horizon; in other words, if the crescent is sighted in one country, it should be seen in the other, were it not for natural barriers, such as clouds, mountainous terrain, and the like.

* What is the proof of sighting the moon?

- The evidence could be one or more of the following:

1. You have sighted it yourself.

2. The testimony of two men of impeccable character, provided that you do not have any knowledge of instances that they may be wrong, and that you do not dispute their testimony.

3. The lapse of thirty days on the month of Sha'ban, thus reaching certitude that Sha'ban has come to an end and that Ramadhan shall commence.

4. When the news of the birth of the moon of Ramadhan becomes commonplace that you are sure of the sighting.

* Suppose I did not know whether it will be the start of Ramadhan, and I intend to fast tomorrow. How would this day be treated?

- You make your niyyah as though this day was of Sha'ban. If, however, during the day it was announced that it was the first day of Ramadhan, you rectify the niyyah and your fast shall be in order; i.e. there shall be no need for you to fast instead.

* How would I know that Ramadhan has drawn to a close and that the month of Shawwal has started?

- In the same way/s you have come to know of the sighting, and/or the start, of Ramadhan.

* All right. If I have concluded that I sighted the moon of Ramadhan?

- You should fast. So too should every Muslim who is adult, sane, and sure that fasting would not endanger their health, nor on a journey, or in a comma.

As for women, they should be fasting, provided that they are not in a state of haydh or nifas, for they are not required to fast. They must, though, make up for the days of fasting they missed out at a later date.

* Should someone fear that fasting may harm them, what should they do?

- He who fears for himself of falling ill as a result of fasting is not required to fast. Nor is he who believes that fasting would worsen his poor state of health in any way, be it hampering his recovery or increasing his pain. This should, however, be commensurate with what is generally accepted in these circumstances.

* What about the person who is on a journey?

- If he sets out for a journey after zawaal, [he should continue with his fast]. Should he set out before dawn, he should not fast.

* What if he travels after dawn?

- In this case, [fasting is not in order, irrespective of whether or not it was clear in his mind that he intended to travel the evening before]. He should, therefore, do qadha.

* If I want to fast, how should I go about it?

- You should make niyyah, of seeking proximity to and pleasure of Allah, the Most High, for fasting from the onset of dawn to sunset.

* Doesn't fast mean abstention?

- Yes.

* What should I abstain from?

- You should abstain from nine things believed to cause a fasting person to break fast.

1 and 2. Deliberate eating and drinking, be it little or much.

* What if I did not do it on purpose?

- As long as you did it inadvertently, your fast should be in order.

* Can I rinse my mouth with water without swallowing it?

- Yes, you can do that. If, however, the intention of rinsing was to seek cooling off and the water found its way to your stomach, you should make up for that day (qadha). Yet, if you swallowed the water unknowingly, you don't have to do qadha.

* Can I dip my head in water, taking precautions, in the process, not to let water find its way to my stomach?

- Yes, you can do that, albeit it is absolutely makrooh.

3. [Deliberately telling lies to Allah, or His Messenger (s.a.w.), or the Infallible Imams (a.s.)].

4. Deliberate sexual intercourse.

* What about the fasting man and his wife?

- They can have sexual intercourse outside fast times.

5. All kinds of masturbation.

6. Deliberate staying in a state of janabah until dawn. If a person had a sexual intercourse that rendered them in a state of janabah, they should do ghusl before the onset of fajr (dawn), so that they are tahir to embark on fast.

* Suppose I entered a state of janabah during the night, but could not do ghusl due to being unwell, for instance, what should I do?

- You should do tayamum before the onset of dawn.

* What about women?

- If they become tahir after being in either a state of haydh or nifas, they must do ghusl before the onset of dawn, so that they fast while in a state of tahara.

* Suppose I was asleep during the day, and dreamed having a sexual intercourse precipitating ejaculation. What should I do?

- The emission of semen in this case should not render the fast invalid. It should be in order, even without performing ghusl.

7. [Deliberate inhaling of air laden with thick smoke or dust].

8. Deliberate throwing up.

* What if this takes place beyond one's control?

- It wouldn't invalidate one's fast.

9. Intravenous injection with water or other liquids.

* Should a fasting person intentionally commit any of the aforesaid acts, what should they do?

- They should refrain from committing those acts and make amends according to the following detail:

a. Should a fasting person remain in a state of janabah on purpose until the onset of dawn, they should abstain during the day [Let their abstention be in a form of alqurbal mutlaqah, i.e. without specifying that this abstention is for the obligation of fast of Ramadhan or out of courtesy thereof].

b. In the case of lying to Allah, His Messenger, or inhaling thick smoke or dust, [they should abstain from eating or drinking for the rest of the day in compliance with the lawful injunction is either to carry out the obligation of fast or to abstain, i.e. from eating and drinking out of respect].

c. For nullifying one's fast due to committing any of the other acts, [they should abstain for the rest of the day out of respect for the lawful injunction].

In addition, one has to make up for the days that have been rendered invalid and pay an expiation. This could take the form of either emancipating a slave, feeding sixty poor people, or fasting two consecutive months for each day of fasting that had been rendered null. This is so, irrespective of whether rendering fast invalid was by something lawful (halal), such as drinking water, or unlawful (haraam), such as drinking alcohol or masturbation.

* How would you feed sixty poor people?

- You could serve them with food, making sure that they had their fill. You could also supply them with foodstuffs by giving them approximately 750 gm each, of either dates, wheat, flour, rice, moong beans or the like for every day that you missed by default. You, cannot, however, give them money instead. You could do so, though, only by way of proxy, i.e. by authorizing the poor person to buy the foodstuff on your behalf and take possession of it.

* What if I was not able to fast any days of Ramadhan for a valid reason, such as sickness, or travel?

- You could make up for any number of days by fasting during the year, except for the days of the two eids (al-Fitr, and al-Adh'ha).

* Suppose my illness continued until the next Ramadhan. How should I go about it?

- You won't be required to do qadha. Instead, fidya (redemption from certain religious obligations by a material donation or ritual act), becomes due. In this case, you should give to the poor by way of sadaqah 750 gm of food for each day that you missed.

Having said that, I must remind you of the following:

1. It is not permissible to fast on either the first day of Eidul Fitr or the first day of Eidul Adh'ha, be it qadha or for any other purpose.

2. [The eldest son of the deceased should make up for any period of fast that his father had missed out during his lifetime for a valid reason. So to are the periods of fast the father did not do, even though he was able to do so. This can, however, be done by the son, if he was not a minor at the time of his father's death nor was denied his inheritance].

3. There are certain categories of people who are allowed not to fast:

a. The elderly, who cannot fast, or fasting could cause them aggravation or difficulty. In this case they should resort to fidya, by donating 750 gm of wheat, which is preferable, for every day they did not fast. They are, though, not required to do qadha.

b. The expectant mother, who is approaching the date of delivery, and who feels that fasting could entail danger to her wellbeing or that of her baby. In this case, she should make up for the days missed later.

c. The nursing mother, who is experiencing a lack of milk, and whose fast could harm her or her baby, [provided that she was the only source of her boy's suckling]. Conversely, it is not permissible for her not to fast. If, however, it was permissible for her not to fast, she must make up for the days she missed.

However, it is incumbent on both, the nursing mother and expectant mother to make amends by donating 750 gm of food for every day they did not fast.

4. Like prayer, which is either obligatory or voluntary, fasting can be either too. Rather, it is one of such voluntary acts of worship that are strongly recommended - tradition has it, "It is a refuge from hell", "It is a form of zakat that renders the body pure", "By it the worshipper enters paradise", etc.

It has been related that fasting in the following days and occasions is highly rewarding:

a. Three days in each month, preferably the first and last Thursday of the month and the first Wednesday of the last ten days of it.

b. The anniversary of the birthday of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the day he was summoned to declare his Prophethood.

c. The Day of al-Ghadeer (Celebrating the appointment, by the Prophet 's.a.w.', of Imam Ali 'a.s.' as his successor).

d. The 25th day of Thil Qi'dah.

e. The 24th day of Thil Hijjah.

f. The whole, or part, of Rajab.

g. The entirety, or part thereof, of Sha'ban.

And last, but not least, my father narrated to me this tradition from Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.), “In order that your fast be fully accepted, you should give zakat”, meaning zakatul fitra (a specified type of religious dues paid by the worshippers when they complete the fasting of Ramadhan).

My father added that it is incumbent on every adult who is sane and has provisions for the entire year to set aside zakatul fitra for himself and his dependants, be they members of his immediate family or others, and be they children or adults, including those guests who arrive on the eve of Eid [or after it has set in].

The amount of zakatul fitra, per head, is three kg. of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, other foodstuffs, or their value in money. It has to be set aside on the eve of Eid, or on the day of Eid [before prayer, for those who performed it], and up to zawaal for those who did not say the Eid prayer. This should be paid to the poor and the needy, who are eligible to receive income support from monetary tax (zakatul maal). (See Dialogue on Zakat).

It is to be noted, however, that the zakat of those who are not of a Hashimite descent is not halal for the Hashimites.

Zakatul Fitra should not be given to one’s dependants, such as father, mother, wife, and offspring.

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